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ABSTRACT

The paper describes a study of the practicum experiences for 39 participants in a diploma program for education of the hearing impaired at the University of British Columbia. Students were ranked according to 59 competencies in four categories (lesson planning, communication skills, classroom climate and behavior management, and professional qualities). The interaction of age, sex, program year, and previous teaching experience with academic excellence and practicum grades was explored as well, the relationship between academic and practicum grades was examined. No statitically significant effects were found for age, prior teaching experience, or program year in relation to practicum success; no differences were found in either practicum or academic success in regard to the sex of the student. Academic grades did predict practicum success while practicum success predicted academic excellence. Results of competency rankings revealed that young teachers considered behavior management the most important item in classroom organization matters. Also ranked highly was the ability to individualize programming. (CL)

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Training teachers of the hearing impaired: Some preliminary findings on the practicum component.

Paper presented at the 1985 Bi-annual National Convention of the Association of Educators of the Hearing Impaired, Milton, Ontario, August 12-14.

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Training teachers of the hearing impaired:

Some preliminary findings on the practicum component.

The entire field of special education has altered dramatically in the past two decades. Education has undergone a restructuring process and philosophical changes are occurring relative to school responsibility, program delivery and program implementation. The prospects for exceptional children have altered significantly, as there have been major gains made in our ability to provide sophisticated services through educational, medical and social agencies, and advanced technology.

The major changes witnessed in all special education have profoundly altered the education of the hearing impaired. In recent years, there has been a proliferation of day school programs as well as the acceptance of the use of total communication in a majority of these classes (Scott, 1983). Recent surveys of hearing impaired students in the United States reveal that 50 percent of all hearing impaired students are enrolled in regular public school programs (Craig & Craig, 1983). In addition, an increasing number of hearing impaired students are being integrated into classrooms with normally hearing students on a full-time or part-time basis (Craig & Craig, 1983; Rawlings & Trybus, 1978; Wolk, Karchmer & Shildreth, 1982). In Canada, the pendulum is swinging in the same direction as increasing numbers of hearing impaired students are being served with the regular school population.

The changing issues, trends and movements apparent in the education of the hearing impaired presents new challenges to teachers and to teacher preparation programs. In addition to new skills, young teacher trainees must be acutely aware of, and familiar with, the various communication modes which may be presented in different teaching environments representing a range of geographical

areas.

Educational programs have changed, and therefore teacher education preparation programs in the education of the hearing impaired must carefully examine their curricula in an effort to better meet the needs that their students will have once they are in an actual teaching situation. Teacher education programs may not be able to prepare prospective teachers to meet the varying demands of teaching in all educational settings, but they do have a responsibility to acquaint students with the differences that exist among various programs and settings.

The general goal of training programs for educators of the hearing impaired is to produce competent teachers who will enhance the social and emotional adjustment of hearing impaired students while helping them to achieve at levels commensurate with their innate abilities. However, empirical research concerning the efficacy of programs, or even practices within the programs, is sorely lacking (Shores, Burney & Wiegernik, 1976). Similarly, little research has been directed at establishing the characteristics of potential teachers that predict, at least in part, success in the field of the education of the hearing impaired.

Among the characteristics which are frequently referred to as being necessary for success in teaching the hearing impaired are good physical health, warmth and understanding, patience, perseverance, emotional stability, understanding of the needs of children, sound basic training in teaching, and sound academic achievement (Power, 1971). Rudloff (1966) investigated the characteristics of teachers of the deaf. He found them to be more mature, to have greater job stability and more professional qualifications than a matched group of teachers of hearing children. They also had more interest in social

service activities, but were no different from the control group in attitudes toward children.

Power (1971) studied the characteristics of successful student teachers of the deaf using 90 subjects in an Australian teacher preparation program. Using incoming academic grades, intelligence, final academic mark and final teaching mark as criterion measures, Power found that initial academic record and intelligence were the only major correlates of success for student teachers. He also found, in contrast to other studies (Meisgeier, 1965), that previous teaching experience with hearing children impacted well on success with hearing impaired students. Perhaps the most provocative aspect of the Power study was the finding that academic success and teaching success were related in men but not in women. This led the author to surmise that women were more intuitive in their teaching, men more intellectual.

Competency-based teacher education programs.

Training programs for educators of the hearing impaired are distinguishable by the breadth and intensity of study requirements (Grant, 1983). Prospective teachers require the same repertoire of skills as those needed by teachers of non-exceptional children. As well, they must possess a considerable number of techniques peculiar to the education of the deaf (Power, 1970).

A number of writers believe that there should be a delineation of specific competencies that students in all teacher preparation programs must master before they are graduated as trained teachers (Coker, 1976; Cooper, Jones & Weber, 1971; McDonald, 1978; Mulhern, 1978). Hence, many training programs for teachers, and for teachers of the hearing impaired, are structured on competency-based teacher education models. Those relative to the education of the deaf have been explored in the literature over the past twenty years

(Council on Education of the Deaf, 1972; Sass-Lehrer, 1984; Schwisow, 1974; Shreve, 1979; Sowards, 1969; Telecky, 1959; Venn, Serwatka & Shreve, 1982).

It seems logical that if teacher educators could agree upon the qualities that a teacher should possess, then the teacher preparation programs could be designed to include those competencies that would develop the knowledge, skills and abilities required (Scott, 1983). In pursuit of this goal, an initial step in the preparation of teachers to work with hearing impaired students is the identification of competencies most critical to these teachers. The suggested bases for selecting competencies include defining the teacher's role (Sowards, 1969; Van Nagel, Suidzinski, Serwatka, D'Zamko & Raiser, 1978), reviewing the literature for proposed competencies (Telecky, 1959), and selection by concensus of some pre-specified group of professionals (Council on Education of the Deaf, 1972; Council on Teacher Education, 1978).

The selected competencies and the options included in a teacher preparation program specializing in hearing impairment are influenced by a matrix of factors. These include, but are not restricted to, the logic of the faculty involved, the philosophy of the program, its views on current issues, the practicum placements available, and time constraints. Grant (1983) suggests that such variation is beneficial to the field as a whole since it imposes self-evaluation as well as promoting research in diverse aspects of the curriculum. Identical curricula among training programs would prove to be a detriment to hearing impaired children (Grant, 1983).

Relatively little has been written regarding the competencies that are important for teachers of hearing impaired youngsters and few comprehensive studies have investigated the most relevant competencies. In an early influential study, MacKie (1956) asked practising teachers to rate a list of

competencies in terms of importance. In addition, MacKie had ten members of a competency committee, made up of experts in the education of the deaf, write statements concerning the skills, knowledge and ability that they regarded as essential for a teacher of the deaf. MacKie (1956) found that the successful teacher was considered to be the one who had developed a wide range of specialized competencies.

In a recent study, Scott (1983) reduplicated the 92 competency statements first used by MacKie in 1956. The 235 respondents provided demographic data about themselves in addition to rating the perceived importance of each competency item. A comparison of the rank order of importance showed differences in the two studies. Individualization of curricula and program delivery was rated most highly by today's teachers. Teachers in both studies gave low ratings in importance to competencies relating to the abilities of teachers to administer different types of tests to hearing impaired students, items dealing with acoustics and hearing aids, and, surprisingly, the methods for teaching children with other handicaps or other handicaps in addition to hearing impairment.

Sass-Lehrer (1984) focussed on teachers in the field and the competencies required in different educational settings. She found that competency needs varied according to whether students were integrated or not and also in relation to the extent of the integration. This bolstered the findings of an earlier study where Sass-Lehrer (1983) discovered that teachers in non-integrated and integrated settings had different perceptions of the relative importance of competencies most critical to their effectiveness.

In a similar study, Serwatka, Venn and Shreve (1984) asked all teachers of the hearing impaired in the state of Florida to rank 55 competencies required

by teachers of the hearing impaired. The investigators focussed on finding differences and similarities in ranking according to teacher characteristics which included the educational level of the teacher, grade level taught, type of school and type of position, such as self-contained classroom, resource room or itinerant work. Significant differences were found in the ranking of competencies based on teacher characteristics. Most differences related to the type of school -- whether residential or day -- followed by the grade level taught.

The practicum component in teacher training.

Competency involves more than mere knowledge -- it implies skill in a process. Student acquisition of basic competencies is most appropriately demonstrated and evaluated in the student teaching experiences that constitute a vital component in teacher preparation programs. The major goals of practica are to graduate students who have the knowledge and skills to perform their roles at some level of competence; to socialize students to the teaching field in a way that is compatible with the goals of the training program; and to give students a professional attitude that promises continued striving toward greater competency once the trainee is on the job.

Practicum is the crucial moment in learning when theory becomes practice (Ciampa, 1975); it represents that part of teacher preparation that is widely acknowledged to be the most influential for later on-the-job behaviour (Walker, 1978). Within the practicum context, students are directed toward a diverse array of tasks which reflect their inherent ability, past learning and present training. They are expected to demonstrate that they possess and can maintain and improve the competencies -- skills, knowledge and attitudes -- that will enable hearing impaired children to achieve to optimum levels in a variety

of settings.

But, in spite of the enthusiasm of college students and master teachers, and the studies that have considered student teaching to be the most important part of teacher education programs, overshadowing academic and professional course work (Lortie, 1975; Peck & Tucker, 1973; Yamamato, Pederson, Opdahl, Dangel, Townsend, Paleologos & Smith, 1969) student teaching is often the least systematic part of the program and has traditionally received less attention than other aspects (Egbert & Kluender, 1979; Walker, 1978).

The problems of developing reliable observation systems for assessment of competencies are a major concern. Moreover, practicum placements operate on a set of assumptions which move the quality of the experience beyond the control of the training programs. It is assumed, for example, that all practicum placements will be equally appropriate for applying and practicing skills while the supervising teachers are expected to possess and value the competencies that the program is trying to teach. Moreover, it is expected that all evaluators will hold identical views and that all supervisors will demonstrate consistency in rating competency acquisition.

The most desirable site for practicum experience will be neither adequate nor appropriate lacking quality supervision. Colleges generally assign their own program personnel as supervisors, viewing this as the most natural and legitimate link between university and school. The typical supervisor will visit the student five times and spend approximately six hours in the school (Emans, 1983). Much evaluation responsibility falls to the cooperating teachers who need to display the ability to observe well, in terms of the effects of teaching behavior on the learning of students, to provide constructive criticism which will guide students in their practices, and to verbalize the rationale

for the use of the methods and lessons that student teachers are expected to learn (Emans, 1983).

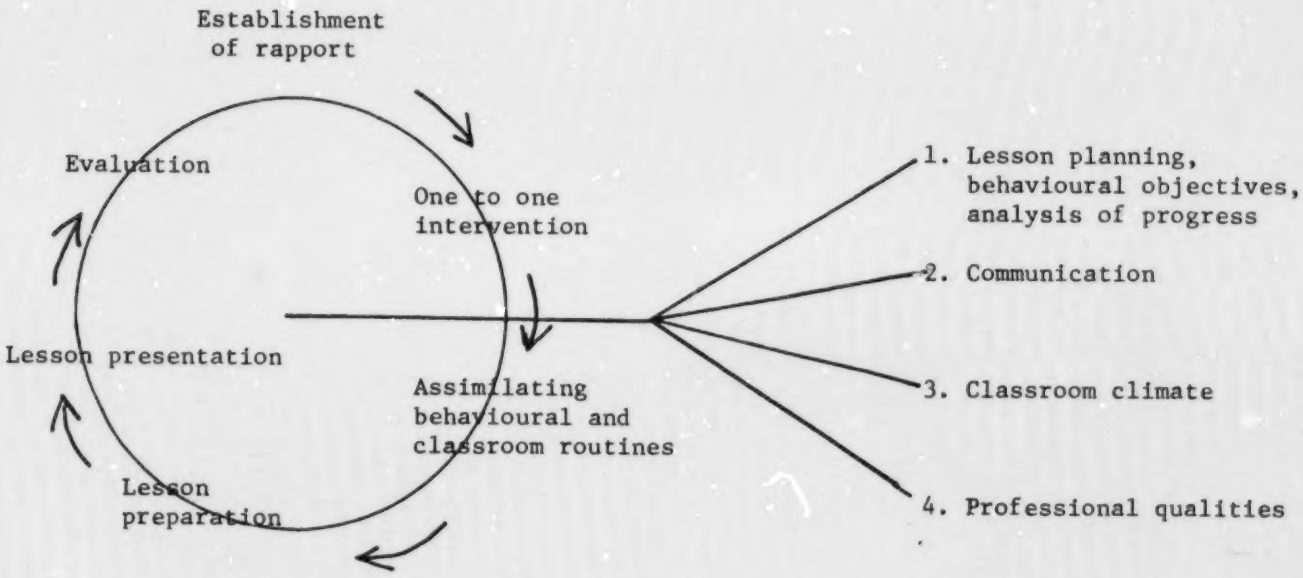
At the moment, 81 teacher preparation programs for educators of the hearing impaired are operating in North America -- 41 graduate programs, 15 at the undergraduate level and 25 programs at both levels (Grant, 1983). In Canada, five programs are operational, four at the graduate level and two at the fifth year or diploma level. While each program has evolved its own individual philosophy and orientation, the curriculum is generally structured around the certification standards laid down by the Association of Canadian Educators of the Hearing Impaired (Certification Standards, 1980).

At the University of British Columbia, trainees in the diploma program for educators of the hearing impaired are involved in 15 weeks of practica, broken down into four blocks. Practica does not consist of a single placement in a residential school, but is rather concerned with developing competencies for teachers to work in a variety of settings. A range of options are available for students in residential schools, special classes, integrated settings and on itinerant programs. As well, geographic locations are varied and on one practicum, students are encouraged to accept placements in other Canadian provinces. In concert with the eclectic nature of the training program, each student teaches at a variety of developmental levels and has experience with oral/aural and total communication methodology. Increasingly, accommodation is being made for students who wish to direct their energies to the multiply handicapped hearing impaired student.

The criterion measure of success is the final practicum mark, a composite of the ratings of college supervisors and master teachers, as evaluated on a listing

of competencies viewed as vital for beginning teachers of the hearing impaired. Figure 1 illustrates the progression of tasks within each practicum and shows the major competency grouping.

Figure 1: tasks and competencies within practica.



Purpose of the study.

Practicum experience and evaluation operate on a set of assumptions. It is expected that students will be able to generalize the knowledge and skills learned in academic courses to the classroom situation. As well, it is assumed that all practicum placements are equally appropriate for applying and practising skills, that all educational evaluators will hold identical views, that all supervisors will demonstrate consistent ratings and that all supervising teachers possess the competencies that the program is trying to teach.

This study was undertaken, in part, to study the validity of some of these long-held assumptions. Specifically, the research was designed to validate the results of training -- to assess whether students demonstrated elevated competence over the practica periods. As well, the study looked at whether significant differences existed between the evaluations of faculty supervisors, supervising teachers and student self-evaluations.

The focus of the initial research is on teacher characteristics, both of trainees and, in a different sense, of neophyte educators in the field. Therefore, in a partial reduplication of the Power study (1971), this investigation assessed the static variables of sex, age and prior teaching experience in relation to practicum success and explored the possibility of a correlation between high academic standing and superior practica performance.

A second aspect of the study was directed toward judging whether the competencies assessed during the practicum experience, and those taught in academic courses, are valuable to young teachers once out in the field. Competencies must change in light of the philosophical and organizational shifts occuring in the education of the hearing impaired and it is important to assess whether the university and practicum experience is providing a solid foundation and logical starting point upon which young teachers can build the skills appropriate for their own unique educational situations.

This research was initiated by Dr.'s Bryan Clarke and Margret Winzer in the spring of 1984. The results reported in this paper do not cover the full spectrum of the research objectives, but focus upon teaching success and academic excellence as related to the static variables of age, sex and experience. Early results of the competency rankings are also included. The

preliminary nature of the research must be stressed. The small sample and the nature of the analysis provide but the barest inklings of trends that may be confirmed as the study continues.

Sample.

The 39 students who passed through the diploma program in the education of the hearing impaired at the University of British Columbia in 1983-84 and 1984-85 constituted the sample. The group consisted of seven males and 32 females; 21 had taught before with hearing children while 17 had no prior teaching experience. Ten students entered the program with good skills in signing and finger spelling; of these, two were deaf individuals and two were trained interpreters.

For the second part of the study a listing of competencies was sent to 62 individuals -- those involved in teacher training, master teachers and graduates of the diploma program in the education of the hearing impaired at U. B. C. Participants were asked to rank 78 competencies in four different categories. The accepting sample -- those who returned the scale -- consisted of 15 individuals, a little less than 25 percent of the mailing list.

Instrument.

Prior to 1983, assessment of student teachers in the diploma program consisted of a global grade and descriptive comments on a student's strengths and weaknesses, based loosely on the Teacher Evaluation Report (Power, 1970). It was considered that a precise focus on competencies would improve both the reliability and utility of the evaluation process. Competency statements were identified through a literature search and were then refined and agreed upon by the professional faculty involved in the preparation of teachers of the hearing impaired.

In all, 59 competencies were identified in four categories. The 27 competencies listed under A, lesson planning, represent skills which should be part of the repertoire of all trained teachers. Component B, communication skills, provides a precise focus on 19 specific areas of teaching behavior in the domain of the education of the hearing impaired. These include language approaches and techniques, aspects of speech development and instruction, monitoring of amplification, auditory training, and adeptness in school-board systems of manual communication. Factor C assesses classroom climate and behaviour management while professional qualities are subsumed under D.

In the ranking schedule sent to personnel in the field, the major competencies were retained, although ordered a little differently for purposes of clarity and comparison. In addition, aspects related to academic work during the training year were appended as a new category. Respondents were simply asked to rank items within each category. While this is, in a large sense, comparing "apples and oranges," it provides a crude ordering aid in the elimination of redundant items and allow the formulation of a more sophisticated five-point Likert-type scale.

Results.

In this preliminary analysis of the data, the focus was upon the interaction of the static variables -- age, sex, program year and previous teaching experience -- with academic excellence and practicum success. As well, the relationship between academic and practicum grades was explored. Data was examined using analysis of variance (ANOVA) and a multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA). Findings of this preliminary analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Preliminary findings (ANOVA) on sex, age and experience with practicum success.

	n	Mean	s.d.	
				Age
Practicum	27	1.78	0.934	
	11	1.64	1.027	(SS=0.156, df 1, F=0.17)
				Experience
Practicum	21	1.95	0.973	
	10	1.50	0.972	
	7	1.43	0.787	(SS=2.202, df 2, F=1.24)
				Sex
Practicum	7	1.86	1.069	(SS=0.124, df 1, F=0.1345)
Academic	7	2.00	0.5774	
	31	1.74	0.5143	(SS=0.3803, df 1, F=1.378)

In this study, with the level of significance set at 0.05, no statistically significant effects were found for age or prior teaching experience in relation to practicum success. Similarly, no differences were discovered in either practicum or academic success in regard to the sex of the student. As well, the year in the program yielded no significant results in relation to practicum (SS=-.519, df 1, F=2.350).

The major correlate of practicum success appears to be academic standing; the relationship was statistically significant (SS=2.376, df 4, F=2.6903, < 0.05). Academic grades predicted practicum success while practicum success predicted academic excellence so that students who ranked highly in one area were more likely to rank in the top group in the other.

With the competency rankings, an examination of the demographic data provided by the respondents revealed that five were employed in special schools, three in self-contained settings and five in integrated situations, on itinerant work or as consultants. Two respondents were just beginning their careers. Total communication was the mode used by eight of the respondents, two taught with an oral method and five reported using both oral and total communication approaches in their work.

To analyse the data related to competency rankings, the competencies were first ordered for frequency and then ranked. A nonparametric analysis of variance was used to compare the competency ratings of the respondents. Rankings were analysed in terms of the type of teaching situation and the mode of communication with the Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance sub-program, found in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences Update computer package (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner and Bent, 1979). Results are presented in Table 2.

The results indicated that on items related to classroom organization and skills, young teachers consider the management of behavior the most important item. Items on children's attention, their classroom behavior and following of directions ranked most highly. Not surprisingly, the establishment of attending behavior was seen as extremely important by those teaching in settings using an oral approach. As well, the ability to individualize programming to meet each child's needs was seen as an important competency.

Table 2: Competency rankings and Kruskal-Wallis H values.

Competency	Rank order			Kruskal-Wallis H values	
	MacKie study	Scott study	Present study	Type of position	Communication methodology
Category B.					
Emphasizes the development of language.	25	1	1	1.145	3.318
Uses correct English.			5	0.276	1.003
Adapts language to the linguistic level of the child.			2	1.540	4.043
Clarifies language by rephrasing/reworking.			3	2.123	1.676
Provides incidental language correction.			4	1.056	2.049
Provides incidental speech correction.	2	29	7	3.871	3.548
Participates in formal speech program.			9	3.395	6.366*
Understands children's speech; uses appropriate techniques to aid comprehension			14	4.226	5.591
Facilitates speech reading	6	16	12	3.164	2.830
Monitors amplification.			11	**1.450**	0.248
Corrects amplification malfunctions.			13	**3.167**	1.736
Ability to use auditory training techniques.			10	0.893	0.346
Adept in school based manual system.			8	**0.043**	1.657
Understands children's manual communication.			6	**0.524**	3.863
Category D.					
Thorough knowledge of:					
The anatomy of the ear.			4	2.049	1.991
The etiology of hearing impairment.			2	4.487	1.063
The psychological effects of hearing impairment.			1	0.813	1.533
Procedures for assesment of hearing.			10	2.770	4.295
Mechanics of amplification.			6	1.816	0.347

	Rank Order			Kruskal-Wallis H values	
	MacKie study	Scott study	Present study	Type of position	Communication methodology
Informal testing instruments.			17	0.370	0.818
Psycho-educational tests.			12	0.853	0.485
Administration of informal tests.			15	0.123	0.288
Wide variety of language programs.	25	1	9	1.069	0.379
Methods for teaching speech.	2	29	7	4.556	2.588
Whole language approaches.			11	5,830*	0.352
Language assessment.			3	5.114	0.655
Programming for language.			5	3.611	1.649
Ability to work in an interdisciplinary team.	37	13	13	2.503	1 3.350
Ability to help parents to accommodate to the loss.	11	12	21	3.571	0.324
Ability to individualize instruction for various disabilities.			20	4.581	4.362
Ability to aid in development of social skills.	14	13	18	2.641	1.001
Ability to aid in emotional development.	12	11	16	4.705	4.772
Ability to group students.	3	1	19	0.227	1.300
The effects of hearing impairment on the family climate.			8	7.002*	0.425

In communication skills, all areas of language -- assessment, approaches and programming -- were the most highly rated by the teachers. Monitoring of amplification, formal and informal testing procedures and areas relating to speech were not considered to be particularly essential. While a knowledge of the anatomy of the ear and the etiology of hearing impairment was seen as vital knowledge, the respondents indicated that knowledge of multiple-handicapped children was a non-essential competency. Teachers considered a knowledge of the psychological effects of hearing impairment on the individual to be vital, but attached less importance to developing social and emotional skills in hearing impaired children.

Little difference was discovered among respondents in relation to the position in which they taught or the communication methodology employed. Participation in a formal speech program was significantly more important to those using an oral communication approach. Teachers in self-contained classrooms attached a much greater importance for integrated approaches to language programming than did teachers in other situations who gave similar ratings. The most differences between teachers in various situations were discovered in the knowledge of the effects of hearing impairment on the family climate. Teachers in special schools rated this as very important and teachers in itinerant settings gave credence to the notion but those in self-contained classrooms saw little importance in this.

Discussion.

It has been stressed that the results of this study are preliminary and provide only the barest inklings of what may be trends that will be confirmed by furthere investigation. The small sample size, the reliance on graduates

from only one training program and the instrument used impose limitations on the research. Bearing this in mind, the preliminary results are provocative and indicate future routes that can be followed.

Opinion has been divided as to whether previous teaching experience with hearing children is desirable before embarking on a career in the education of the hearing impaired (Lord and Kirk, 1950; MacKie, 1956; MacKie, Dunn and Cain, 1960; Murphy, 1963, 1964; O'Connor, 1964). In an earlier investigation, Power (1971) studied 90 prospective teachers of the deaf, 55 women and 35 men. Of these, 25 had not less than three years' teaching experience with hearing children and 65 came to the program with no experience. Power found that, although there were no significant differences in academic rank, experienced teachers earned a significantly higher teaching mark. In the present study, 21 of the participants had taught hearing children had taught hearing children and 17 had no prior classroom experience. However, no significant differences were found between the students based on prior teaching experience.

Power (1971) also correlated academic excellence and teaching success in relation to the sex of the teacher trainee. One of his most interesting findings was that academic and practica success was related for men but not for women. This led the investigator to surmise that women were more intuitive in teaching, men more intellectual. No statistically significant differences were found between the performances of men and women in this study. However, only seven men were in the training groups and the small sample may be a confounding factor on this variable.

The one significant finding in this preliminary research was that practica and academic grades correlated. A high-achieving student was very likely to

retain high grades across both practicum experience and the spectrum of academic subjects with the major prediction of success being in high practicum marks. This is similar to Power (1971) who discovered that initial academic record and intelligence were the major correlates of success for student teachers.

The ultimate evaluation of instruction is the appropriateness of competencies once teachers are in the field. The rank ordering of competencies provided by young teachers just beginning their careers in the education of the hearing impaired ceded some interesting information.

In earlier studies (MacKie, 1956; Scott, 1983), respondents gave low ratings to competencies dealing with the administration of different types of educational tests, items dealing with acoustics and hearing aids and methods for teaching children with additional handicaps. In the present study, the latter item was regarded as non-essential, while the other items were considered to be important, although the teacher could get along without them. In the earlier studies, as in this one, teachers felt that the ability to individualize instruction was important. Similarly, all studies saw the psychological impact of hearing impairment on the individual as important but in this study the development of social and emotional skills were not ranked highly.

In the Scott study (1983), the ability to use manual systems was rated as 45 and 46 in importance of 92 items, although it was not seen as important at all by MacKie's (1956) respondents. In this study, an adeptness in school-based manual systems was viewed as an essential competency. However, the other areas that are inherent components of a total communications approach -- speech, lip reading, auditory training and amplification -- did not rate

highly at all. It could be surmised that teachers are more often relying solely on manual communication and disregarding the other vital aspects of total communication.

Conclusion.

As the field of the education of the hearing impaired alters in tune to the new philosophical notions of special education, training programs must endeavour to change. The programs must provide for young teachers the basic skills that will be required in a variety of educational settings.

This study indicates that the major correlate of success in practicum is high academic grades. As well, the competencies required by young teachers are not the same in all areas. Teacher training programs should remain eclectic in nature and provide as many experiences as possible for teacher trainees. As we move more toward adopting total communication approaches, it is vital that all components of the methodology are stressed so that the approach is total, not simply a manual system.

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